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**Newmarket at a contract building**

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# NEWMARKET

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# NEWMARKET

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## THE TOWN AND DISTRICT AN INTRODUCTION

VISITORS to Newmarket are often puzzled to find that although the postal address of the town is Suffolk, it is surrounded by villages which are in Cambridgeshire. As in the case of so many English curiosities which puzzle the visitor, the answer lies in tradition. It is said that the town owes its foundation to an outbreak of plague at Exning which resulted in the transfer of the market held there to higher ground two miles S.E. A more likely explanation is that the reputed healing properties of the water at St. Wendred's Well at Exning became less attractive after the alleged miracle at Walsingham, and visitors ceased to turn aside at Newmarket, preferring to lodge there on their way to Walsingham.

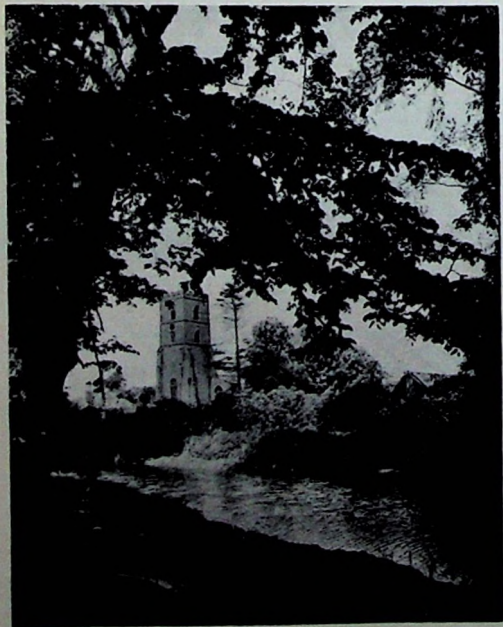
Exning was an ancient settlement of the British Iceni and stronghold of the Anglian "South Folk" who occupied their territory. When Norfolk and Suffolk, originally independent tribal domains, were joined together to form the kingdom of East Anglia, Exning remained the home of the ruling family, and it is claimed on good authority that St. Etheldreda, daughter of King Anna and founder of Ely, was born there in A.D. 630. Because of these ancient ties, Exning was allowed to remain in Suffolk when Edward the Elder created the "shires" in the 10th century, although it was surrounded by the territory of the newly formed Cambridgeshire. Newmarket, Exning's daughter town, has maintained the association with Suffolk to the present day and its parent village is now in the Urban District.

Newmarket is first mentioned by name in a charter of Henry III, dated 1226-7, granting Richard de Argentine, lord of the Manor, permission to hold a fair there. The new village rapidly outgrew Exning, being situated on the Icknield Way and also the route from London to the famous shrine at Walsingham, which became so important during the Middle Ages. During the Tudor period malting was the main occupation of the inhabitants and records show that the village had already spread beyond the boundary of Exning parish and was divided into Suffolk and Cambridgeshire sections for taxation purposes.

Early in the 17th century Newmarket is described as a "great thorowfare" and later as "a well built street seated in the Great Road, full of inns" with a "very good" market on Tuesdays. In 1683 a fire swept through it, destroying many buildings but incidentally frustrating the Rye House Plot, because Charles II was obliged to leave the threatened Palace and return to London earlier than expected. The oldest houses in the town today date from the

rebuilding which followed this conflagration, with the exception of the house in Palace Street which is said to have belonged to Nell Gwynne. There are a few good examples of Georgian architecture, particularly at the west end of the High Street, but the urban development which changed Newmarket from what was really a village (the population in 1800 was only 1,700) to a town belongs to the Victorian era. The Urban District was established under the Local Government Act of 1894 and consists of three civil parishes—All Saints, St. Mary's and Exning. Until early in the present century the town on the south side of the High Street was in Cambridge-shire, but this so complicated the work of the local authorities that despite the dictum of the great Duke of Cambridge a change had to be made.

*The Church of St. Martin, at Exning,  
site of the Anglian settlement from which Newmarket developed*



# THE SPORT OF KINGS

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The Iceni, founders of Exning and so indirectly of Newmarket, had a horse inscribed on their coins, and some enthusiasts have thereby deduced that they had a racecourse on the Heath! Although such speculation must be dismissed as wishful thinking, we know that the Britons bred horses and hunting dogs, that the Romans imported Arabian horses for racing purposes, and that the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed informal races when they found a suitable ground. Old records tell that two tournaments were arranged at Newmarket early in the 14th century but were forbidden by Edward II, who feared a conspiracy. There is a tradition that when Richard II was Prince of Wales he rode in a match with the Earl of Arundel on Newmarket Heath.

The association between Newmarket and racing really dates from 1605, when James I broke his journey there on the way from Theobalds to Thetford. He was so delighted with the place and the potentialities of its environs for hunting that from 1607 until his death in 1625 he visited it two or three times a year. The chases in the vicinity of the town were restocked with hares and partridges; Hare Park is a remnant of this. During the later years of James's reign, races were regularly arranged for the spring and autumn visits of the court. In 1634 a race for a "Gold Cup" was instituted. Charles I continued to visit the town almost every year and was there in 1642, when a committee of both Houses of Parliament arrived with the ultimatum which precipitated the Civil War. His last visit was as a prisoner in 1646. Racing was prohibited under the Commonwealth government owing to the political danger of large assemblies. In 1664 Charles II instituted the famous "Town Plate" and after the palace was repaired in 1671 visited the town every year until his death in 1685, often taking part in matches himself. Pepys, Evelyn and many other famous figures of the age came to Newmarket with the Court. Rubens was knighted by the King at Newmarket.

James II had frequented Newmarket when he was Duke of York, but had no time for such diversions during his troubled reign. William of Orange attended the Spring meeting of 1689 and thereafter spent as much time as he could spare hunting and racing. He imported fourteen Arabians to improve the royal stud and appointed Tragonwell Frampton keeper of his racing establishment. Frampton held the same office during the reigns of Queen Anne—an enthusiastic patron of Newmarket—and George I.

Although they maintained the royal stables, the first three Georges took little personal interest in racing. The principal royal patrons of the sport during the 18th century were the Duke of Cumberland, second son of George II, who bred the famous "Eclipse" in his stud at Windsor, and the Prince Regent, who was a frequent visitor to Newmarket until his celebrated quarrel with the Jockey Club in 1791. About 1750 a club was formed by a group of



leading racehorse owners, who first met in London but later acquired an old coffee-house in Newmarket as their headquarters. In 1808 the Jockey Club, as it was called, began to acquire the land on which the racecourse and training grounds were situated, previously held by the Crown or owned privately, and by 1820 had bought nearly all the Heath. The Club was thus able to "warn off" those who did not conform to the rules they formulated for the prevention of malpractices. The jurisdiction of the Jockey Club was ultimately accepted on all racecourses, and all officials connected with them as well as trainers and jockeys must now hold licences granted by it.

The Duke of York, brother of William IV, was a racing enthusiast and stayed for a time at the Old Palace, which had however fallen into a bad state of repair. After the accession of Victoria it was sold in lots and demolished, and Newmarket saw little more of royalty until the 'eighties when Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, began his long and happy association with the town. He not only had many racehorses in training at Egerton House and attended the Newmarket meetings regularly, but also spent much time in the neighbourhood during the shooting season, staying with his friend Sir Ernest Cassels at Moulton Paddocks or at Chippenham Park. George V visited Newmarket many times and maintained a stud at Sandringham as well as the training establishment at Egerton House. King George VI attended the Spring meeting in 1938 and but for his tragic early death would no doubt have become as well known in Newmarket as his father and grandfather were. During the war the Heath was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and all racing, including the classic races which could not be held at Epsom, took place on the July course. In 1942 the King saw his "Sun Chariot" win the Oaks and in 1945 was present at the last Newmarket Derby. Queen Elizabeth II shares the enthusiasm of her royal forbears for the sport and has horses in training at two establishments in Newmarket.

*Racehorses at exercise in winter woods*





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# ABOUT THE TOWN

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NEWMARKET lies in a hollow in a belt of chalk downland. The residential environs are more elevated extending to the fringe of the Heath on the West side, spreading into the paddock zone in the South, and around the edge of the training grounds on the East side, and merging with meadows in the North. Few urban districts are surrounded by so much open space or have an atmosphere so completely unpolluted by factory smoke—for this Newmarket has to thank its fortuitous association with the training and breeding of racehorses, which is the principal source of employment in the town and also the mainspring of much commercial activity. Such small industries as have been established do not interfere with its amenities. There are factories for making caravans, power controls and magnetic devices, transistors and for servicing mowing machines and tuning motor car engines. There are also a foundry and agricultural engineering works at Exning.

Newmarket High Street is part of A11, the main road from London (60) to Norwich (49). A45, the road from Cambridge (13) to Bury St. Edmunds (15) and Ipswich (41), joins A11 two miles S.W. of the town and leaves it one mile N.E. At the roundabout at the E. end of the High Street it is joined by A142 from Ely (13).

The town has a station on the Cambridge-Bury St. Edmund's line. London is only 1½ hours by fast train and there are cheap excursions to the coast during the summer months.

The roads from London and Cambridge, both beautiful avenues of beeches for a mile or more before they meet at the Devil's Ditch, lead into the noted approach to Newmarket known as Cambridge Hill—a wide straight highway which runs for 14 miles from the Ditch to the W. end of the High Street with the Heath on the N. side and the golf course on the S. side. On the left side of the Cambridge Road, just beyond Egerton House, is the entrance to the July course, on the W. side of the Ditch. The Rowley Mile Stands (so called from Charles II's favourite nickname of "Old Rowley") which include a special stand and room for royalty, are reached by drives from the W. end of the High Street, just beyond Falmouth Avenue. The fountain erected as a memorial to Sir Daniel Cooper in 1910 at the top of the High Street is a point where all visitors should pause and admire one of the most picturesque views in the district—the western part of the street, which includes some of Newmarket's most attractive houses, with the green hump of Warren Hill rising high in the background, crowned by the "Round Plantation".

At the foot of the hill which slopes down from the Cooper Memorial is a turning to the right, opposite the King Edward VII Memorial Hall. This is the Avenue, which leads to the station, Park





*Newmarket High Street*

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Paddocks, where Tattersall's sales are held, and residential roads on the S. side of the town. Further along on the S. side of the High Street is the General Post Office, a fine new building erected after the air raid on Newmarket, when the old one was demolished. Next comes the handsome neo-Georgian frontage of the principal building in the town, the headquarters of the Jockey Club, which extends back to Cardigan Street and includes offices, a residential block, a royal suite, gardens and lawns. Also on the S. side of the High Street, where it begins to slope upwards again, is the famous Rutland Arms, the substantial hotel which was built on the site of the Ram Inn, and which is well known throughout the sporting world. Part of the building dates back to Charles II. The frontage overlooks Rutland Hill, a wide sloping space adjoining the High Street. The house which is believed to have belonged to Nell Gwynne is in Palace Street, which links Rutland Hill and Sun Lane.



The Congregational church on the S. side of the High Street between the Jockey Club and the Rutland Arms occupies part of the site of the old palace. It was erected in 1863 and the oak pulpit and some of the pews were made from timber taken from the palace buildings during demolition. All Saints' Church was erected in 1876 on the site of the church attended by the Court when in residence at the Palace. St. Etheldreda's Roman Catholic Church is a new Church built in Exeter Road. About half way along the N. side of the High Street is a turning to the left, Wellington Street, which leads to St. Mary's Square. St. Mary's Church was originally built soon after the foundation of Newmarket and contains an early piscina found during restoration in the 19th century, but most of the structure dates from the late Perpendicular period. The register dates from 1638. Market Street, the next turning on the N. side, was probably the site of the original "new market" (the market is held on the S. side of the High Street). The summit of Warren Hill, which affords a fine panoramic view of Newmarket and the surrounding country, may be reached by taking the first turn to the left in Old Station Road.

St. Martin's church at Exning has an Early English chancel with lancet windows; the transept windows show the transition from Early English to Decorated style. St. Etheldreda is believed to have been baptised in the stream which flows through the village.

The problems which face those whose duty it is to plan the future of the town of Newmarket are immense, and yet a microcosm of the agonising re-appraisal which is taking place throughout South-East England. Fortunately, there exists a very happy relationship amongst the West Suffolk County Council (the Planning Authority), the Newmarket Urban District Council, the Jockey Club and other racing interests and all have agreed upon a policy for the future development of the Urban District which recognises (a) the need to provide conditions in Newmarket which will continue to protect the efficient working of the racing and breeding industry, of which it is the world centre; (b) the need to provide wider opportunities for employment in the town; (c) the need to give strength to the town both financial and in terms of population so as to enable the Urban District Council in the future to provide the necessary services and amenities at reasonable cost; and that these needs are of equal importance.

Under the joint policy these needs will be brought into harmony and the town will be allowed an even growth under a carefully controlled development plan until the population reaches 20,000 (including a maximum of 3,000 persons) under the Town Development Act, 1952.

This is town planning of the highest order and deserves the support and acceptance of all who desire to retain the serenity and atmosphere of Newmarket which is venerated not only by its townspeople but by thousands far beyond its borders.

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# THE RURAL DISTRICT

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## AN INTRODUCTION

The Newmarket Rural District includes within its boundaries three distinct types of country and borders on a fourth. In the north-west is an expanse of black-peat fenland, in the centre, sloping up from it, is a belt of white chalk covered with short grass, with patches of loam and marl here and there, merging along its north-east border with a sandy strip belonging topographically to the Brecklands, and in the south is a portion of the 200-350 ft. chalk ridge which runs from Royston to Bury St. Edmunds, mostly overlaid with boulder clay. In prehistoric times the higher central belt was the only passage between the impassable swamps which stretched northwards to the Wash and the impenetrable woods which extended eastwards to the coast. This corridor, naturally, is rich in ancient remains.

The Roman Icknield Way is believed to have run through the centre of the grassland belt. The original pre-Roman Icknield Way was not a road but a route, consisting of several roughly parallel tracks trodden out by the vagaries of travellers. The Street Way, which starts from Wandlebury Camp on the Gogmagog Hills and runs about one to two miles west of the Icknield Way, enters the Rural District west of Hare Park, where there is a group of round barrows, crosses the Cambridge Road and follows the old Beacon course to the Devil's Ditch, then crosses the Heath to Exning and continues to Chippenham. There are more round barrows in the parishes of Chippenham and Kennett. Many early British objects, and a Roman pavement found at Landwade, may be seen in the Sedgewick Museum, Cambridge.

The famous Devil's Ditch runs seven miles from Wood Ditton, 350 ft. up on the chalk ridge to Reach, on the edge of the fens. It is now generally accepted that this great earthwork was constructed by the East Angles during the fifth or sixth century as protection against the powerful Mercians. (For a detailed account of the excavations see *The Fenman's World* by Dr. C. Lucas, Jarrold, 1930.) Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, overran the Ditch and slew Anna, the Christian king of East Anglia, early in the seventh century. The Devil's Ditch and environs of Newmarket Heath are a habitat of chalk-loving plants and insects. Besides the common scabious and harebell, the bee orchid and rare purple Pasque flower (*Anemone Pulsatilla*) may be found, and among the butterflies is the beautiful chalkhill blue.

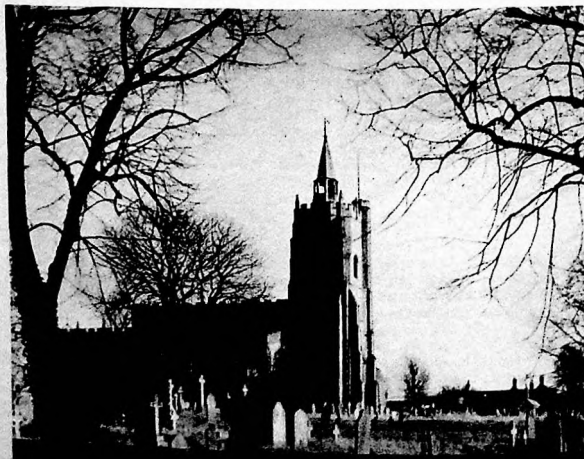
Of the parishes north of Icknield Way, Bottisham—or rather the adjacent parish of Lode, formerly part of it—the Swaffhams, Reach, Burwell, Wicken, Soham and Isleham are all on the fringe of the fens and each has a "lode" or canal linking it to the River Cam, except Isleham for which the River Lark served the same purpose. The remaining parishes—Snailwell, Fordham with Landwade, Chip-

penham and Kennett cover an area where the soil varies from field to field. Between Fordham and Chippenham is a pocket of undrained fen in the same condition as the larger and more famous Wicken Fen. Chippenham Fen is unique in that the pines and birches of the Breckland strip overlook its willows and sedge — an odd ecological patchwork!

Wicken Fen is now a National Trust nature reserve, the habitat of water lilies and other beautiful and more rare plants such as the flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and water violet (*Hottonia palustris*), and the haunt of the swallow-tail butterfly. A detailed guide to the fen is published by the National Trust. Adventurers' Fen, on the south side of Wicken Fen, was drained during the war. (A very interesting account of this area is given in *Adventurers' Fen* by E. A. R. Ennion, Methuen, 1942.) Quantities of enormous bog oaks which have been buried for thousands of years were unearthed and laid along a new road opened to link Reach and Upware.

Some very fine churches built of stone or flint are included in the Rural District and most of the villages have picturesque houses and cottages with thatched or pantile roofs and plastered timber or flint walls. There are also some red brick handsome Georgian houses. Most of the Victorian and later houses are built of yellow gault brick. There are many modern houses with white walls and russet tiles which harmonise well with the landscape.

*The magnificent church at Burwell; this church is adorned with marvellous carvings both in wood and stone*



# THE VILLAGES

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## The Southern Uplands

**CHEVELEY** (pop. 1,624) may be reached from Newmarket by turning left  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles along Duchess Drive, an avenue of beeches which was once a private drive belonging to Cheveley Park. During the Middle Ages a castle was built on the high ground between the park and the village, but hardly any trace of it remains today, nor of the mansion which succeeded it.

The first church at Cheveley was erected about 1260 and in the west wall of the north transept is an early lancet window decorated with fleur-de-lis. The register dates from 1559.

Cheveley has some pretty thatched cottages both in the main street and at Broad Green which was originally the other manor of Cheveley, held by the Benstede family in the Middle Ages and then by the Folkes. Sir Winston Churchill stayed as a boy at Banstead Manor.

**ASHLEY** (pop. 465),  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles along the Clare road, has a fine thatched house with pink plaster walls and some thatched cottages. The church was built in 1845 to replace one now demolished. Further along the Clare road, in the wood on the left, is the ruined tower of another church which belonged to Silverley, the S. part of Ashley parish.

**WOOD DITTON** parish (pop. 1,134) lies along the road which branches left from the Newmarket-Saffron Walden road just past the cemetery. The church will be seen three miles along on the left. The main village street is half a mile further along down a turning to the right. The "Three Blackbirds" Inn in the main street is a picturesque thatched building.

The church is Early English with Perpendicular additions, and there is a fine 15th-century screen with traces of colour on its panels. In the floor of the aisle are brass portraits of fine workmanship of Henry English (d. 1393) and his wife. The register dates from 1567.

**KIRTLING** (pop. 357) is four miles S.E. of Newmarket on the road which continues Duchess Drive (this eventually leads to Stradishall). On approaching, the Norman tower of the church will be seen amid trees on the left; it is reached by a path leading through a farm yard. In the 15th century a spacious chapel, of red brick, was built on the S. side of the 13th-century chancel, separated from it by a high arcade of two arches. The chapel contains the majestic tomb of the second Lord North (d. 1600)—a complete contrast to the plain tomb of the first lord (d. 1564). There is a brass on the North wall of the chancel with portrait and inscription in memory of Edward Myrfin (d. 1553). The register dates from 1585. Further along the road is a Roman Catholic chapel erected in 1877 by those members of the North family who were still Catholics.



It is believed that the first Kirtling Hall was a fortified manor house, for the remains of a deep moat may still be seen. The succeeding 16th century mansion was demolished in 1801 with the exception of the gatehouse, which is incorporated in the present residence. Elizabeth I is believed to have been imprisoned at Kirtling Hall for a short time during the reign of her sister Mary. The main village street is reached by turning right about a quarter of a mile beyond Kirtling Towers, at the Queen's Head Inn. The turning to the left just beyond the Queen's Head leads to the picturesque hamlet of Upend. Most of its dwellings are white or pink-washed thatched cottages with colourful gardens in summer.

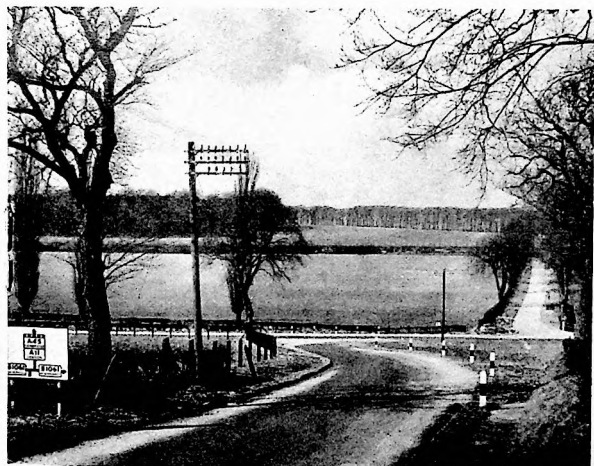
**STETCHWORTH** (pop. 514)  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles S. of Newmarket, is reached by turning right two miles along the road to Wood Ditton or left two miles along the Saffron Walden road. These by-roads meet on the W. side of Stetchworth Park. The chancel of the church has been much restored but has a deep splayed Norman window on the S. side and an Early English E. window. The nave arcades are 15th century and the font belongs to the same period. The register dates from 1666.

**DULLINGHAM** (pop. 520) is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles S.S.W. of Newmarket on the road to Saffron Walden. There are some pretty thatched cottages in the village. The church is restored Early English with a Perpendicular tower and N. porch, which has an ancient door with a massive lock. A very fine oak table will be seen in the vestry. The register dates from 1558.

**BURROUGH GREEN** (pop. 289), 6 miles S. of Newmarket, is reached by turning left from the Saffron Walden road one mile beyond Dullingham. The "Burrough" was probably the earthwork in Park Wood. The village lies around a fine green, and a handsome black and white timbered farmhouse with a huge chimney will be seen on the left. The school on the right was first built in 1712 and has the figures of a boy and girl over the door.

The church is reached by a lane leading across the green to the right. Its structure has been altered many times since it was built in the 13th century, and several bricked-up arches and doorways will be seen in its walls. The register dates from 1571. The Hall, near the church, incorporates the remains of a Tudor manor house mentioned in Evelyn's Diary. In a field nearby are the foundations of a 14th century chantry.

**WESTLEY WATERLESS** (pop. 165),  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles S.S.W. of Newmarket, is reached by turning right from the Saffron Walden road  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles beyond Dullingham. A lane leads up from the S. side of the village street to the small flint church, which is not easily seen since its Norman tower was demolished. The most important feature of this tiny church will be found covered with a mat in the S. aisle—two very beautiful brasses depicting Sir John Creke (d. 1325) wearing a curious cloak, and his wife Alyne in wimple and mantle. At the E. end of the aisle is an ancient stone effigy. The font probably belonged to the original Norman church. The register dates from 1557.



*Where the Stetchworth-Dullingham Roads meet*

**BRINKLEY** (pop. 204) is 6½ miles S.S.W. of Newmarket and two miles S. of Dullingham on the Saffron Walden road, but the main street lies along the Cambridge-Thurlow road. The nave and chancel of the church have been thoroughly restored, but they are actually older than the tower as their window tracery belongs to the Decorated period, whereas the tower has a Perpendicular window. The register dates from 1685.

## From Breckland to Fenland

**KENNETT** parish (pop. 340) lies along the W. bank of the Kennett Brook, the E. boundary of Cambridgeshire. Kennett consists of the Bell Inn and a few houses adjoining the main street of Kentford, on the Suffolk side of the stream, four miles N.E. of Newmarket on the road to Bury St. Edmunds. The main village, consisting of the church and some pretty thatched cottages, lies one mile N. of Kennett End. The church stands in wooded parkland and is reached by a grass lane. It is a good example of development from Norman to Early English. The double piscina with its moulded arches adorned with bunches of grapes is a very fine example of Early English work. The oak screen is 15th century. The register dates from 1558.

On the left side of the Kennett-Chippenham road is a large tree-crowned tumulus traditionally associated with a battle between English and Danes which is believed to have taken place on Dane Hill, but it is probably of much earlier date. High up in the branches of a pine tree on the mound is a curious wooden shaft, locally called "the spear"; it cannot, of course, be such an early weapon, but its real origin has been forgotten.

**SNAILWELL** (pop. 216), 2½ miles N. of Newmarket, is reached by following Fordham Road to the outskirts of the town and then taking the right fork. The village has some pretty thatched cottages, shaded by huge elms and chestnuts. A pool in the village is the source of the little River Snail, which flows northwards through Fordham and along the W. side of Soham to join the Ouse. The church has a round flint-built Norman tower; the rest of the building, much restored, belongs to the 14th century. The register dates from 1629.

**CHIPPENHAM** (pop. 366), 5 miles N.E. of Newmarket, may be reached via Snailwell. Charles I visited the Russell family here in 1646. Admiral Russell built a mansion on the site of the old house after his victory at La Hogue in 1692 (commemorated by La Hogue Hall farm) but this was later demolished. The present house was built in 1886.

The church belongs mainly to the 15th century, but retains a Transitional Norman nave arcade with circular and octagonal pillars. The arches illustrate the evolution from the almost round to the fully pointed. The Perpendicular S. arcade has clustered columns. In 1936 some mediaeval wall paintings were uncovered on the N. wall of the nave, including St. Christopher and St. Michael weighing a soul. The *chancel* screen is 14th century. Erskine May, the famous Parliamentary authority, is buried in the churchyard. The register dates from 1595.

The row of cottages opposite the church are late 17th century or early 18th century; the school also belongs to this period.

By special arrangement permission may be given to go into Chippenham Fen. Apply in writing to Chippenham Park Estate Office.

**FORDHAM** (pop. 1,709) is five miles N. of Newmarket on the main road to Ely. On approaching, an 18th-century brick house will be seen on the right; this is known as Fordham Abbey because it stands on the site of a Gilbertine Priory founded in the 13th century. The streets of the village form a rough square, the Ely road being on the W. side, and the river Snail flows through the centre, under bridges on the roads forming the N. and S. sides of the "square". The N. side is the main village street, leading up to the church on high ground. The village is now of considerable size, and a large and well laid out Council estate has been built on the Chippenham road.

The church of St. Peter is mainly 14th century and has a very fine interior with lofty Perpendicular arcades, but its principal feature of interest is a unique 13th-century chamber similar to a crypt, with a vaulted stone roof, which serves as the north porch. Above it is a chapel dedicated to St. Mary, entered by a staircase in the wall outside, with fine Decorated tracery in its E. window. It was originally enclosed, but in 1864 the S. wall was opened into the church by the construction of arcades, and it is now used as a Sunday school room and gallery. A small window on the left of the doorway leading into the vaulted chamber below contains some ancient glass, including a picture of an archbishop, believed to be St. Thomas a Becket. Among the many memorials in the church is a brass of 1521 and a window for James Withers, the Fordham poet, whose pretty cottage may be seen near the bridge in the main street. The register dates from 1567.

**LANDWADE**, a hamlet four miles N.N.W. of Newmarket, is included in Fordham parish. It may be reached by taking the second turn left along the road to Fordham or through Exning. Its little 15th-century church stands in a meadow and can only be approached by the private drive to the Hall, where the key may be obtained from the caretaker's cottage. The church contains some good woodwork and stone carving, and is virtually a mausoleum for the Cotton family, who settled here in the Middle Ages. Three early tombs have lost their brasses, but there are three later ones with effigies of a Sir John (d. 1593) and his wife (N. transept), a Sir John (d. 1620) and one of his three wives and a Sir John (d. 1689) in the S. transept, which illustrate the changing fashion in such monuments. The fourth Sir John (d. 1712) and his wife are commemorated by simple portraits carved in relief on a marble medallion.

### **On the Fringe of the Fens**

**BOTTISHAM** (pop. 975) lies six miles W.S.W. of Newmarket, its village street being the second turning to the right along the main road to Cambridge. On the right is the Swann Inn—Bottisham once had nine inns—and further along on the same side is a very old

house with pink plaster walls, just before the entrance to the church. The present building was erected about 1270 on a Norman foundation, but the nave was entirely reconstructed about 1320. The porches were built during the 14th century, the Galilee over the W. doorway being a most unusual feature. The register dates from 1561. Bottisham Park, E. of the village, was built in 1797.

The first school in Bottisham was founded in 1730 by the Jeyns family of Bottisham Park, and it is therefore particularly appropriate that Bottisham should have been chosen as the site of one of the original three "village colleges" in Cambridgeshire. The one-storey building erected in 1936 will be seen on the left side of the Lode road. It includes the village junior school, the senior school for the district, and accommodation for adult courses and university extension lectures.

**LODE** (pop. 607) is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles N. of Bottisham, its village street being a cul-de-sac leading from the Cambridge-Mildenhall road to Bottisham Lode, from which it takes its name. Lode was separated from Bottisham parish in 1894. There are some pretty thatched cottages and a thatched village hall, built in 1930 by Lord Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey as a memorial to his father. Anglesey Abbey, which stands W. of the village facing the main road, incorporates a vaulted room and stairway of an Augustinian Priory founded in the 12th century. The church was built in 1853, and a separate register was started in 1863.

**SWAFFHAM BULBECK** (pop. 633) is six miles W. of Newmarket on the Cambridge-Mildenhall road. The name Swaffham, here and in Norfolk, is believed to indicate a settlement of Swabs, one of the Germanic tribes who emigrated to Britain in small numbers, and were remembered by their name in a predominantly Anglian district. The church, on the Bottisham road, has an Early English tower, Decorated chancel and nave and a clerestory added during the Perpendicular period. The 15th-century benches have been retained in the nave, those in the N. aisle have not been restored at all. The chancel stalls are modern. A magnificent cedarwood chest will be seen at the E. end of the S. aisle, where it is used as an altar for the children's corner, the open lid, carved with the Calvary scene on the inside, serving as a reredos. It is believed to be 15th-century Italian work and probably belonged to the de Vere family, who came into the possession of the manor by marriage, early in the 13th century. The register dates from 1558.

There are some picturesque houses and cottages in the village, both thatch and pantiles being well represented. Burgh Hall, on the Bottisham road, is a gabled pantiled farmhouse which takes its name from the de Burgh family. "Commercial End", which leads down to the lode, has a very fine gabled manor house on the left, and further down is the "Merchants' House" which recalls the days when this sleepy little street was filled with bustling traders carrying their goods to and from the hithe. Opposite the Merchants' House is a large oast house, indicating that hops were once grown in the vicinity. A house incorporating the remains of a 12th-century Benedictine nunnery will be seen in a field at the end of the street.



*Cottages at Lode*

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*Wild swans in winter quarters*





**SWAFFHAM PRIOR** (pop. 634) is seven miles from Newmarket. Visitors are always puzzled by the two churches which stand side by side on the little hill which rises steeply on the E. side of the village street. The explanation is that Swaffham Prior was originally divided into two ecclesiastical parishes, one benefice having been given to the Priory of Ely by Brithnoth, the heroic leader of the English at the Battle of Malden, and in the 15th century a new church was built for the other benefice to replace the original Norman church of St. Cyriac and St. Jullitta. The builders copied the tower of the Norman church of St. Mary, which belonged to the Priory. After the benefices were united in 1667, St. Cyriac's was no longer used, but during the 18th century St. Mary's tower was struck by lightning, and the fearful parishioners decided to abandon it, and to rebuild St. Cyriac's. In 1879 the Allix family, who were always opposed to the change, restored St. Mary's chancel and restored the nave in 1902, but funds did not permit the restoration of the tower, which remained a ruin, so that the people were called to worship in St. Mary's by the bells of St. Cyriac's tower! St. Mary's Norman tower has now been completely restored by the Vicar and the Parochial Church Council. The work was completed with 20th century aluminium spire, in March, 1965, but the bells are still rung from the tower of St. Cyriac's.

Several brasses, formerly in the floor of the old church, will be seen fixed to the walls in St. Mary's. The register dates from 1558.

Swaffham Prior House incorporates a portion of the original Elizabethan house on the site. One of the two windmills on the 88 ft. hill N.W. of the village is still working.

**REACH** (pop. 269) one mile N. of Swaffham Prior and 1½ miles E. of Burwell, became a separate parish in 1954; previously half was included in the former and half in the latter. Roman remains have been found nearby, and there is no doubt that a settlement existed here at a very early date. During the Middle Ages Reach was a place of some importance. The ruins of a church dedicated to St. Etheldreda will be seen near the present church erected in 1860. King John is said to have granted the burgesses of Cambridge the right to hold the once famous horse fair at Reach on Rogation Monday. The Mayor of Cambridge still comes to open the small pleasure fair which commemorates the occasion, and throws pennies for the children of the village.

**BURWELL** (pop. 2,734) is five miles N.W. of Newmarket, and is one of the longest villages in England; the distance from the junction of the roads from Swaffham Prior and Reach to the end of North Street, which runs parallel with the road to Fordham, is nearly two miles. The earthworks of the Norman castle may be seen from the road to Reach.

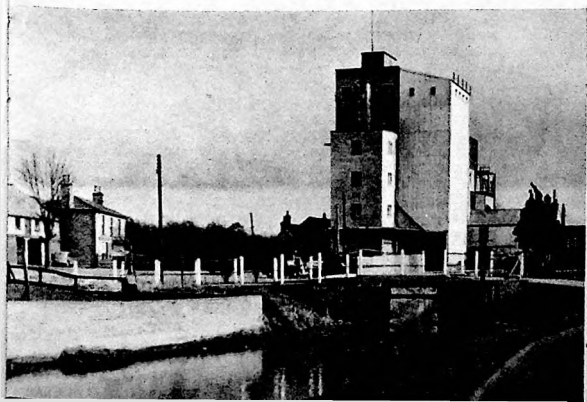
The church of St. Mary is mentioned in the 10th-century chronicle of Ramsey Abbey, to which it belonged. After the Conquest a Norman church was built, and the outline of its tower, with two slit windows, may be seen above the arch beneath the present tower, which was built in the 14th century. There is a tradition that the rest of the church, which was rebuilt in the 15th century, is the work



*The waterworks at Swaffham Prior*

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*Clarke & Butcher's mills at Soham*



of the masons who built King's College Chapel, and the magnificent Perpendicular nave and chancel are certainly worthy of their workmanship. The stained glass, screen, stalls and pulpit are good modern work. In the floor of the chancel is a palimpsest brass depicting Lawrence de Warboys, last abbot of Ramsey (d. 1542). This was made during his lifetime, before the dissolution of the abbey in 1539, showing him in his robes of office, but was subsequently cut in half so that the lower portion could be re-engraved on the other side and fitted to a new upper portion showing him in the dress of an ordinary priest. The matrix of the original, showing the outline of the abbot's mitre, is still visible. The canopy over the figure is also a palimpsest, the reverse side being engraved with part of a deacon's vestment. A mediaeval wall painting of St. Christopher has been uncovered above the N. door. The register dates from 1562.

Burwell has several houses of exceptional interest. One at the S. end of Hightown is believed to incorporate the remains of a chapel of the Knights Hospitallers. Newnham Street (opposite the Exning road) leads to a farmhouse known as the Parsonage, which was a manor house rebuilt from the remains of St. John's Priory, a dependency of Ramsey Abbey, after the Dissolution. On the right, separated from the Parsonage by a ditch which was once part of its moat, is the Tunbridge, a grange also built out of the remains of the Priory. On the left, across a field, is Burwell Hall, a thatched manor house dating from the 16th century. Further along the street is another old house with pantiled gables. (A detailed history of Burwell will be found in the *Fenman's World*, by Dr. C. Lucas, a native of the parish.) Among modern developments, the following are important:

Ness Court, which has separate accommodation for 16 elderly people, and also includes communal facilities.

Burwell House, with its seven acres of land, has been adapted by the County Council, and is now a residential Youth Centre.

Tillotson's Corrugated Cases Ltd. now employs several hundred local people.

**WICKEN** (pop. 655) is nine miles N.W. of Newmarket. The church will be seen on the left before entering the village from the Ely road. The building is mostly 15th century but retains some portions of earlier work. In the S. aisle are two small brass portraits—Margaret Peyton (d. 1414) fixed to the wall and John Peyton (d. 1520) in the floor. The chancel screen is a modern memorial to Henry Cromwell and his wife, who lived at Spinney Abbey after the Restoration. The register dates from 1562. The village consists of one long street widening into a pretty green with thatched cottages. At the Black Horse P.H. a lane leads down to Wicken Fen. Visitors wishing to enter the Fen should enquire at the keeper's cottage on the left.

Spinney Abbey, one mile beyond Wicken on the left, is a farmhouse incorporating the remains of a 13th-century Augustinian monastery. During Henry Cromwell's residence there he was once called upon to provide refreshment for Charles II on a hunting expedition from Newmarket! Just beyond Spinney Abbey is a turning to the left leading down to Upware ("Upper Weir") on the

E. bank of the Cam. The Headquarters of the Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Sailing Club is at Upware.

**SOHAM** (pop. 5,077), eight miles N.N.W. of Newmarket on the main road to Ely, is the largest parish in the Rural District. The Snail, canalised into a lode, flows along the W. outskirts and then turns down to meet the Cam just beyond the hamlet of Barway. The area of fen which lies W. of the lode was formerly Soham Mere, a great lake which remained undrained until 1800. Qua Fen, on the E. side of Soham, is still common land.

Soham might have grown up and around a great monastery like Ely but for the disastrous Danish raid of A.D. 870, for it had an abbey founded about 630 by St. Felix of Burgundy, some forty years before St. Etheldreda founded Ely. This was not rebuilt after the raid, probably owing to its proximity to Ely, but a church of exceptional size was erected in the 12th century. It had a central tower and the four massive Transitional tower arches as well as the nave arcades are retained in the present building. The chancel was entirely rebuilt in the 14th century and has Decorated window tracery. In the 15th century the central tower was demolished and a magnificent 100 ft. Perpendicular tower with elaborately carved battlements was erected at the W. end. The N. porch was added at the same time. Adjoining the N. side are two chapels, the E. one is 14th century and has a small window with fragments of early glass, the W. one is 15th century and is linked to the chancel by a high arch. It is now used as a vestry and organ chamber, but behind the organ the effigies of children of the Bernes family monument may still be seen. The register dates from 1558. There is a small chapel at Barway, three miles N.W. of Soham. The Congregational and Baptist chapels were both founded between 1700 and 1750, but have been rebuilt. The Grammar School was founded in 1686 and now occupies a large house on the left side of the road entering from Fordham. A new village college has been established in Soham, and Hereward House is an elderly people's home which provides individual accommodation.

**ISLEHAM** (pop. 1,392) is seven miles N. of Newmarket. The Kennett joins the River Lark about a mile E. of the village, and further downstream is Waterside, a backwater which was once the village hithe. Spurgeon was baptised in the Lark at Isleham in 1850.

On the left side of the main street is an ancient chapel which belonged to the Priory of St. Margaret, founded in the 11th century. It has Norman slit windows and herringbone work in its walls, and was kept in repair owing to the fact that it was long used as a barn. Further along on the left is the 14th-century church (the roof of the tower is a later addition) entered by a fine lychgate. The beautiful hammerbeam roof was the gift of Sir Christopher Peyton in 1495. The church has old stalls with carved misereres in the chancel and old benches in the N. transept. The very fine altar rails are probably among the earliest in existence and date from the time of Archbishop Laud, who ordered their installation in churches. The magnificent eagle lectern, a rare and noted piece of 15th-century brasswork, was found in the fen between Soham and Isleham, where

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it was probably dropped during the Civil War. In the N. transept is a stone effigy of Sir Godfrey Bernard (d.c. 1275), and in the S. transept several small brasses depicting members of the Bernard and Peyton families, and two large canopied monuments.

## NOTES FOR NEWCOMERS

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**BATH:** Swimming bath at W. end of High Street, Newmarket.

**BUS SERVICES:** Eastern Counties Omnibus Co. Ltd., 73 High Street, Newmarket 2009. Burwell and District Motor Services. Burwell 220.

**CHURCHES:** U.D. Church of England: St. Mary's (see page 17); All Saints' (see page 17); St. Agnes'; St. Martin's, Exning (see page 17); St. Philip's, Exning Road. Congregational: High Street (see page 17). Methodist: Wesley Hall, St. Mary's Square, Newmarket, and at Exning. Roman Catholic: St. Etheldreda's (see page 17). Salvation Army Hall: New Cut, off High Street. R.D. Church of England in all parishes and at Saxon Street (see pages 19-33). Congregational: Bottisham, Burwell, Cheveley, Fordham, Isleham, Soham, Stetchworth, Wood Ditton. Methodist: Burwell, Dullingham, Fordham, Isleham, Kirtling, Soham, Wicken. Baptist: Burwell, Isleham, Lode, Soham, Swaffham Prior. Roman Catholic: Kirtling. Salvation Army Hall, Soham.

**CINEMAS:** Kingsway, High Street, Newmarket. Regent and Regal, Soham.

**CLUBS:** New Subscription Rooms, 99 High Street; Masonic, High Street; Marlborough, Kingston House, High Street; Oddfellows' Lodge, Primrose House, High Street; Foresters', Kingston Passage; Conservative Club, Exeter Road; Working Men's Clubs in Exning Road and New Cheveley Road; Unionist Club, Exning and Astley Institute; Vicarage Road, for apprentice stablemen.

**COUNCIL OFFICES:** U.D. Severals House. Phone: Newmarket 2321. R.D., 30 Park Lane. Phone: Newmarket 2362.

**EARLY CLOSING:** U.D. Wednesday. R.D. Thursday, except Soham and Burwell, which close on Wednesday.

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**MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT:** U.D., Eldon Griffiths (Cons.). R.D., Francis Pym (Cons.).

**NEWSPAPER:** Newmarket Journal, Newmarket Weekly News, Soham Advertiser.

**POPULATION:** U.D., 11,600. R.D., 21,720.

**SCHOOLS:** U.D.: Primary—Houldsworth Valley, All Saints (C. of E.), Exning Road and Exning Village. Secondary Modern—Exning Road. Grammar School—Exning Road. Convent School—Fordham Road. R.D.: Primary Schools in all parishes. Secondary Modern—Burwell. Grammar School—Soham. Village Colleges—Bottisham, Soham.

**SPORT:** Tennis—Clubhouse and courts at W. end of the town. Football and Cricket—Grounds adjoining New Cheveley Road, at Scaltback Park, and at Exning. There are several clubs in the town. The larger villages also have clubs and grounds. Bowls—Green in the Avenue. Fishing—River Lark, Isleham, and in the lodes at Burwell and Bottisham.

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